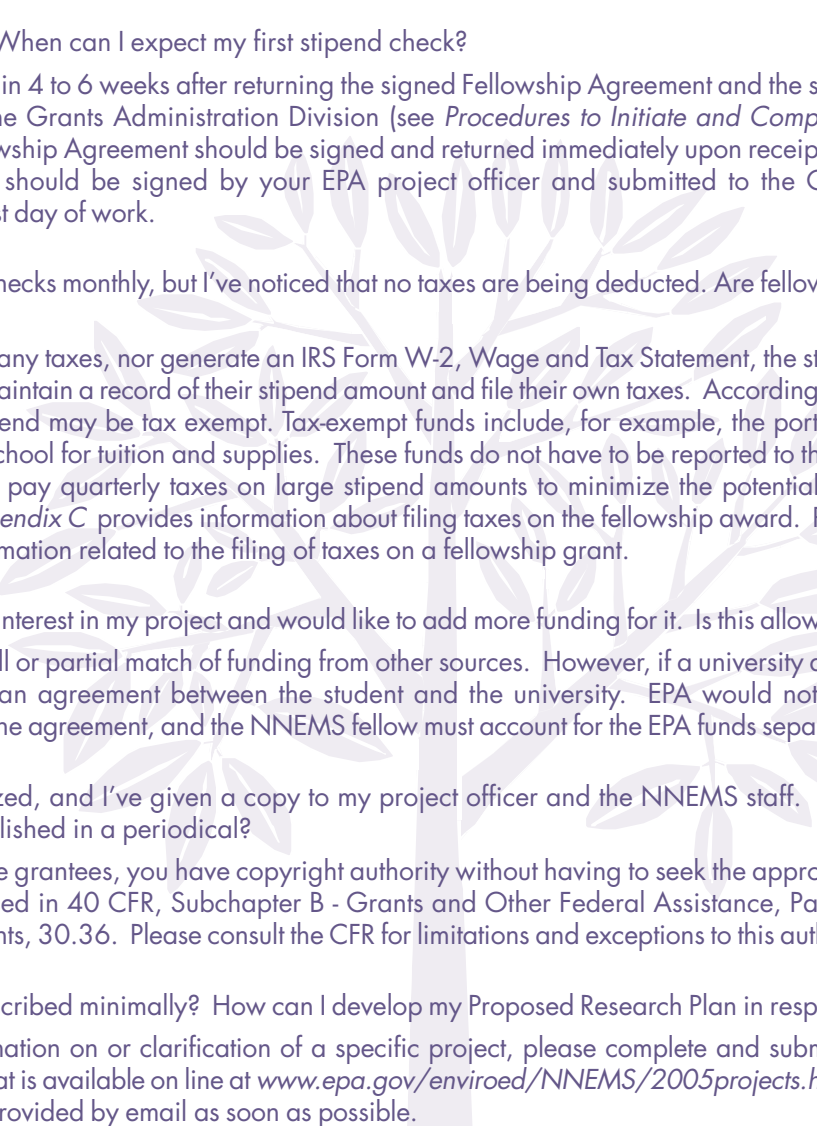


Frequently Asked Questions

Listed below are questions asked by applicants to the NNEMS program in previous years, as well as by students who received fellowship awards.

- Q** How would I obtain information, specifically application materials, for a fellowship in environmental science?
- A** Detailed information about EPA's NNEMS Program, including application forms, is available online at www.epa.gov/enviroed/students.html and in this catalog. Undergraduate or graduate students pursuing environmental programs are encouraged to apply. Updated program and application materials are posted on the web site each year, typically in October.
- Q** I am interested in applying for a NNEMS fellowship, but I do not have a NNEMS Program Coordinator at my school. May I apply?
- A** Yes, any eligible student may apply for a NNEMS fellowship, regardless of whether or not there is a NNEMS Program Coordinator at his or her university.
- Q** I am graduating in May 2005 and will be taking a year off before attending graduate school in the Fall of 2006. Am I eligible to apply for a fellowship scheduled to take place during the Summer of 2005?
- A** No, only students who are currently enrolled in undergraduate or graduate school at the time of fellowship award are eligible.
- Q** I am interested in the NNEMS Fellowship Program, but no projects are being offered this year in the state in which I live. May I apply for projects outside my home state?
- A** Yes, you may apply for research projects located outside your home state, but EPA will not provide funding to cover transportation and housing costs.
- Q** Is the NNEMS program open to international students who attend U.S. universities or colleges?
- A** No. The NNEMS program is only available for students who are citizens of the U.S., its territories or possessions, or who are lawfully admitted to the U.S. for permanent residence.
- Q** I am an American citizen currently enrolled as a full-time graduate student at Cambridge University. Are American students pursuing graduate-level studies in the area of environmental management/environmental protection at Cambridge University eligible to apply for the NNEMS Fellowship Program?
- A** Yes. You are eligible to apply for a NNEMS fellowship because you are a U.S. citizen, Cambridge University is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a fully accredited academic institution, and you are enrolled in an academic program directly related to pollution control or environmental protection.
- Q** Are high school students eligible for the NNEMS Fellowship Program?
- A** No, only undergraduate and graduate students are eligible for NNEMS fellowships.
- Q** Do the project descriptions offered in the NNEMS Catalog remain the same each year, or are new projects offered each year?
- A** The number and types of projects change each year depending on EPA's departmental and program issues and priorities, as well as funding available for the fellowships.
- Q** Do applications have to be received or postmarked by the date of the deadline?
- A** The application packets must be postmarked on or before the date of the deadline. The deadline for the 2005 program is January 15, 2005.
- Q** May my academic advisor mail the NNEMS Reference Form required for the NNEMS application under separate cover, or must the reference be included in the original application packet?
- A** We prefer that the Reference Form be included in the application package, but your advisor may send the letter directly to the NNEMS Fellowship Program. However, please be sure to note on your application packet that the letter will be coming under separate cover. In addition, the letter must be postmarked by the deadline and be clearly marked to correspond with your application.

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- Q** If I request an original, sealed transcript, may I break the seal to make copies of the transcript as required?
- A** Yes. If you receive one original transcript from your university's records office, you may open the sealed envelope to make photocopies. Please include the envelope that contained the original transcript in the application package and note that it was opened to make the photocopies.
- Q** I am interested in applying for a NNEMS fellowship and would like to apply for multiple projects. Do I need to submit original transcripts for each of the projects?
- A** You must submit an original transcript and three copies of your transcripts for at least one of the projects for which you are applying. You are permitted to include copies of your transcript for other projects for which you are applying. See the section, *How to Apply*, on page 5 for detailed instructions on applying for a fellowship.
- Q** I have been selected for one of the projects for which I submitted an application, but have decided to decline the offer. Would I be penalized for the other project or projects for which I applied?
- A** No, you would not be penalized for declining a fellowship offer. The criteria for evaluating and selecting NNEMS fellows are based on determining who is the most qualified candidate who will meet the needs of the specific project.
- Q** When do we find out whether we were selected for the NNEMS Program?
- A** Most candidates are notified of their acceptance in late March or April. Students who are not awarded fellowships are typically notified in late April or early May.
- Q** I just started work on my project. When can I expect my first stipend check?
- A** You should get your first check within 4 to 6 weeks after returning the signed Fellowship Agreement and the signed Fellowship Activation Notice to the Grants Administration Division (see *Procedures to Initiate and Complete a Fellowship* on page 10). The Fellowship Agreement should be signed and returned immediately upon receipt, and the Fellowship Activation Notice should be signed by your EPA project officer and submitted to the Grants Administration Division on your first day of work.
- Q** I have been receiving my stipend checks monthly, but I've noticed that no taxes are being deducted. Are fellowships taxable?
- A** Yes. While EPA does not withhold any taxes, nor generate an IRS Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement, the stipend amount is taxable. Students must maintain a record of their stipend amount and file their own taxes. According to the latest IRS rules, portions of the stipend may be tax exempt. Tax-exempt funds include, for example, the portion of money sent directly to a student's school for tuition and supplies. These funds do not have to be reported to the IRS. The IRS recommends that students pay quarterly taxes on large stipend amounts to minimize the potential for a penalty at the end of the year. *Appendix C* provides information about filing taxes on the fellowship award. Please contact the IRS for any further information related to the filing of taxes on a fellowship grant.
- Q** A nearby university has expressed interest in my project and would like to add more funding for it. Is this allowable?
- A** Yes. It is acceptable to receive a full or partial match of funding from other sources. However, if a university added money to the grant, it would be an agreement between the student and the university. EPA would not have anything to do with that portion of the agreement, and the NNEMS fellow must account for the EPA funds separately.
- Q** My project report has been finalized, and I've given a copy to my project officer and the NNEMS staff. May I copyright the report or have it published in a periodical?
- A** Yes. Because NNEMS students are grantees, you have copyright authority without having to seek the approval of the federal government as discussed in 40 CFR, Subchapter B - Grants and Other Federal Assistance, Part 30, Subpart C - Post Award Requirements, 30.36. Please consult the CFR for limitations and exceptions to this authority.
- Q** What if a project description is described minimally? How can I develop my Proposed Research Plan in response?
- A** If you would like additional information on or clarification of a specific project, please complete and submit the "Project-specific Questions" form that is available on line at www.epa.gov/enviroed/NNEMS/2005projects.html. A response to your question will be provided by email as soon as possible.